

# IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DISTRICT 8

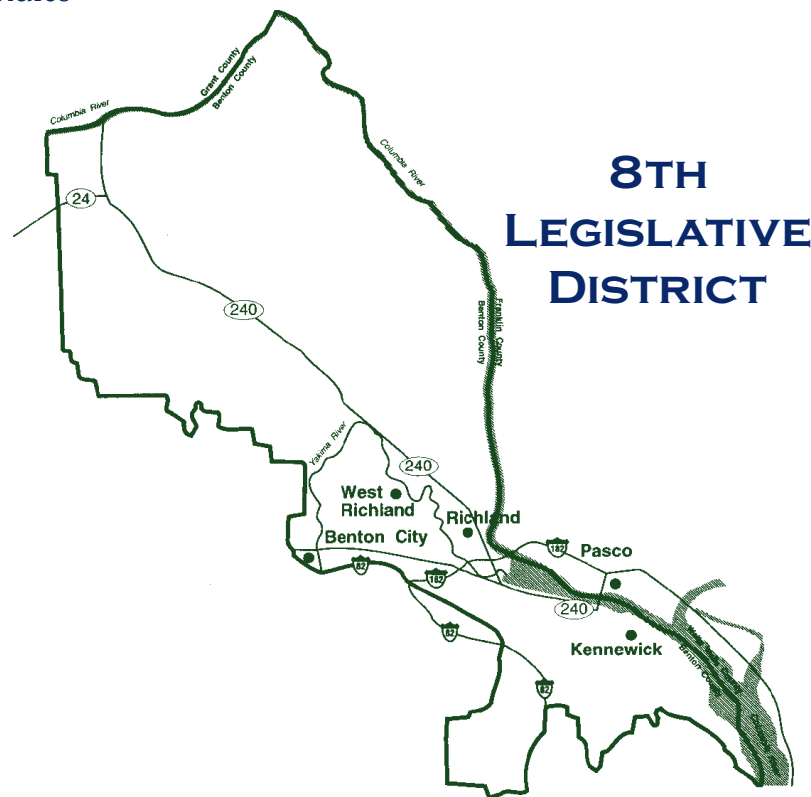
### REPRESENTATIVE **SHIRLEY HANKINS**

PO Box 40600  
401 Legislative Bldg.  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600  
(360) 786-7882  
E-mail: hankins\_sh@leg.wa.gov



#### COMMITTEES:

Capital Budget  
Transportation - *Vice Chair*  
Rules



**TOLL - FREE LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE  
1 - 800 - 562 - 6000**

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Washington State  
Department of Printing

## SPECIAL REPORT AND UPDATE TO SENIORS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**SHIRLEY HANKINS**

PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600



## REP. SHIRLEY HANKINS 8TH DISTRICT

# REPORT TO SENIORS

Dear friends,

These are sobering times. While the international events are out of our direct control here in Washington, they are having a tremendous impact on our state economy and state government. We are doing everything possible to support our nation and serve our citizens.

All of the calls and letters to my office are very much appreciated, and I encourage you to keep communicating with me.

There were many issues in the last legislative session that will have an impact on senior citizens in our community. This newsletter is meant to provide a report on these legislative issues.

From one senior to another, you have my commitment that senior citizen issues will always be an important at the top of my legislative agenda. My door is open, so please let me know how I can help.

Again, thank you very much for your calls and letters.

Sincerely,

*Shirley*

Shirley Hankins  
Your State Representative



## PROGRESS FOR SENIORS IN THE STATE BUDGET

When it comes to fiscal matters, including the state budget, I believe government needs to learn to spend the hard-earned money of taxpayers better than it has been. We must make tough choices and set priorities. One of state government's top priorities must be helping senior citizens.

Meeting the long-term care needs of seniors was an important part of the state operating budget that passed this year. There are many victories for seniors in the budget, including:

- Funding to increase nursing services for individuals living in their own homes.
- A wage increase for long-term care workers.
- Funding to increase the average daily nursing home rate by nearly 10 percent.
- Funding to pay higher rates to boarding homes that provide specialized dementia services.
- Authorization to develop two Medicaid waiver programs to serve Medically Needy individuals in home and community settings.

## MAKING LONG-TERM CARE A LEADING PRIORITY

I am concerned about the number of seniors in our community who are not receiving the long-term care they need. We did make significant progress this session to strengthen Washington's long-term care program. Key legislation that passed included:

- SB 5184, to help prevent abuse, authorized Aging and Adult Services Administration (AASA) to share the results of Adult Protective Services investigations to prospective employers of caregivers.
- SHB 1426 authorized AASA to send quality improvement consultants into boarding homes to facilitate "resident-centered" care.
- HB 1341 expanded access and controls costs for those who otherwise have no alternatives to nursing home placements.

- SHB 1320 required adult family home providers and newly hired resident managers to have at least a high school diploma or GED, as well as meet other education and health requirements. This will improve quality of care and safety in residential settings.

## HELP WITH UTILITY BILLS

The Legislature approved \$1 million in state funds for low-income energy assistance and authorized an additional \$4 million in federal funds through the Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program.

The money from this program will be available almost immediately for the families and seniors who are being hit hard by rising energy costs this winter and spring. Those families and individuals who might qualify for low-income energy assistance can contact their local utility or community action network.

## PROTECTING SENIORS FROM IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft can destroy a person's good name and credit, and it's reaching epidemic proportions around our state. It is both sad and personally devastating, but seniors are increasingly the victims of identity theft. Statewide, it is one of the few crimes that increased last year, and Washington is consistently ranked among the top five states nationwide for this crime.

We are making every effort in the Legislature to fight back against identity thieves. In 1999, lawmakers established the crime of identity theft. Then in May of this year, we approved legislation expanding the definition of identity theft, and placing additional restrictions on collection agencies and credit reporting agencies.

This is only a beginning. I also supported a proposal to create an identity theft bureau within the Washington State Patrol to track down and prosecute crooks, as well as assist the victims of identity theft.

## HERE ARE SOME TIPS FROM THE WASHINGTON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE TO PROTECT YOUR IDENTITY:

- **Do not give your Social Security number, mother's maiden name or account numbers to strangers who contact you, especially by phone, Internet or mail.**
- **Pay attention to what time of month your bills arrive.** If they don't arrive on time, call the creditor to make sure an identity thief hasn't changed your billing address to keep you from discovering phony charges.
- **Guard your mail from theft.** Don't leave outgoing mail in your mailbox.
- **Put passwords on your credit card, bank and phone accounts.**
- **Don't carry your Social Security card.** Leave it in a secure place.
- **Don't carry credit cards or ID cards you don't need.**
- **Tear or shred charge receipts, copies of credit applications, insurance forms, physician statements, bank checks and statements, expired charge cards and credit offers you get in the mail.**

## IF YOU HAVE BECOME THE VICTIMS OF IDENTITY THEFT, YOU NEED TO ACT QUICKLY:

- **Contact your local law enforcement agency and the Federal Trade Commission's Identity Theft Hotline, 1-877-IDTHEFT.**
- **Report the ID theft to your bank and other creditors.**
- **Tell the prosecuting attorney that if the person who stole your identity is found guilty, you'd like the court to issue you an Order Correcting Public Records.**
- **If the ID thief has stolen your checks or made fake checks, and then used those checks to make purchases or pay bills, you will probably be contacted by creditors who want you to pay those debts.**

For more information, visit the Attorney General's web site at <http://www.wa.gov/ago/consumer> or call their consumer line at 1-800-551-4636.